

To William Brockedon Esq. with the Authors respects.
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PATRONAGE OF IRISH GENIUS.

TWO LETTERS,

SHEWING THE UTTER

UNFITNESS, INUTILITY, AND PUBLIC DISCREDIT

OF

ERECTING A BRIDGE OVER THE LIFFEY,

BETWEEN THE

Phoenix Park and the Royal Hospital,

AS THE

NATIONAL TESTIMONIAL

OF

HIS MAJESTY'S MOST GRACIOUS VISIT TO IRELAND,

AUGUST THE 12th, 1821 :

ALSO, PROVING THE

WISDOM, HONOR, and PERMANENT PUBLIC ADVANTAGE
OF ERECTING A

National Gallery;

FOR THE

ENCOURAGEMENT OF THE FINE ARTS,

UNDER THE

Protection of the Royal Irish Institution,

AS THE

Most Noble and Imperishable Testimony of Irish Gratitude,

FOR THAT SIGNAL TOKEN OF

OUR BELOVED SOVEREIGN,

GEORGE THE FOURTH'S

Paternal Goodness to this Country.

C * * * *

"The Victories and Conquests of Greece and Rome have passed away like the lustre of a Morning; but the Pen, the Pencil, and the Chisel, in the hands of their Men of Genius, have rendered the splendid achievement of those Nations immortal."—(See *Postscript*.)

SECOND EDITION.



DUBLIN:

BY HIS MAJESTY'S PRINTERS.

1823.

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LETTER I.

THE Visit of GEORGE the FOURTH to Dublin, as the Capital of Ireland, was the first sally of his paternal affections beyond the confines of England, after his ascent to the Throne. Within, as we may say, a few days after his Coronation, the King, with a generous promptitude, hastened across the sea, from the splendid fetes attendant upon that magnificent ceremonial. The favour becomes more important, when we consider that our present Sovereign is the first of the House of Brunswick, who paid the Irish that compliment. Although it is certain that his Majesty beholds his English, Irish, and Scotch Subjects with an equal eye, yet the prior compliment, which he

paid this Island, cannot be too gratefully acknowledged. His landing here forms one of the most splendid and happy events in Irish History; and as a most high and signal mark of his Royal favour, all men have agreed that it ought to be commemorated in the most splendid manner. But it is not expense alone, but moral and national utility, that is to be considered in this great issue. A suitable NATIONAL TESTIMONIAL, expressed in such a form as to place it at the head of its particular class, would be more splendid and appropriate than a NATIONAL TESTIMONIAL, under a different form, of an inferior order in its own class, although the latter were to cost five times the sum.

HIS MAJESTY had too much good sense and self-respect, to interfere on an occasion which spontaneously flowed from the affections of his loyal Irish People: the offering of public feeling must be enfeebled and less grateful to the Royal breast, if the NATIONAL TESTIMONIAL be not *altogether Irish and National* in spirit and substance. In conformity with its propitious Cause and its significant Title, it ought to bear upon its face the stamp of IRISH and NATIONAL CHOICE, IRISH and NATIONAL GENIUS, and IRISH and NATIONAL EXECUTION.—When the Subscription for this public expression of National Gratitude commenced, it was generally antici-

pated that a sum of 40 or £50,000 would have been raised ; and there can be no doubt that so fair an expectation would have been more than realized, if so unexpected and unexampled a distress had not fallen on the country. When a great Law Lord, who partook of the general belief that the Subscription would have amounted to Forty or Fifty Thousand Pounds, with honest pride, expressed himself on this subject to the King, his Lordship entertained a confident reliance that, with such an ample sum, the Subscribers would have been able to erect a Testimonial upon a commensurate scale of grandeur. Even if it were possible to ascertain the precise words on this occasion, it would be disrespectful to take advantage of the mere verbal forms, when we cannot be at a loss for their affectionate and affable spirit. His Majesty's immediate reply was unpremeditated, and founded in the expectation which he had heard ; but although given without a moment for consideration, it was such as might have been expected from his gracious feelings as the Monarch of a free people, and from his delicate sense of personal dignity, as the most perfect Gentleman of the age. It expressed his deep participation in the sensibility of his people, and implied that he would be most pleased with whatever form of National Testimonial would be most agreeable to the Subscribers, whom he considered to be the

best judges of what would be most useful and ornamental to the Metropolis of Ireland. The subject was not formally introduced by a Deputation from the Subscribers. It was mentioned as a matter of respectful conversation by the great Law Lord, founded in his expectation of a large subscription, (which nothing but the unparalleled national distress would have prevented.) The Royal answer thus called forth, relative to which there are so many contradictory reports, was, as already noticed, unstudied and merely conversational, without any ground or reason for wresting it into a supposition that His Majesty either entertained any prior particular choice, or intended to change a National Testimonial into a form of Testimonial emanating from his Royal will. In all the various editions of the Royal Reply, it manifests a gracious wish and conviction that the Subscribers would in their own way, do the handsome and loyal public act alluded to, in a handsome and becoming style. No person in his senses, can suppose that it was the Royal intention to tie down his subjects to any particular form, so as to induce or compel them, by a well-meant but mistaken adherence to the real or supposed letter, or words of his unpremeditated and affectionate answer, to violate its spirit, and to discredit themselves, by erecting a comparatively mean, paltry, and almost unnecessary bridge, in an out-of-the-way

and little-frequented situation, as a National Testimonial of their gratitude for the high and signal condescension of his Royal Visit to this country. No Subscriber can, for a moment, admit so preposterous an opinion—an opinion so derogatory from the Royal affability and dignified good sense, so contrary to the object for which the Subscription was raised—so likely to defeat its end, and to cast an imputation upon the liberality and sound discretion of the Irish people.

I am perfectly aware that there are a variety of extravagant and contradictory reports in circulation on this topic. Some affirm that the Illustrious Personage not only introduced this subject, but mentioned a Bridge, and christened it. Others add that the King pointed out the spot to an exact foot, where he wished the £50,000 Bridge to be erected! A third set declare that his Majesty named Mr. SOANE, of the Royal Academy in London, an Architect of known fine taste and practical science, as the Artist most fit to be employed on the occasion. I have merely mentioned these different reports of the same story, only to state that I do not believe them; and to shew that even if they were all true, we ought not to interpret them literally, but liberally, in furtherance of the public object: because the Royal observation

was founded in the Noble Law Lord's concurrence with the general expectation that the Subscription would have amounted to 40 or £50,000, a sum which would certainly have paid for the erection of a handsome Bridge, by an Irish Architect, sufficiently dignified, in the single point of expenditure, to be the NATIONAL TESTIMONIAL, and worthy (if a Bridge of little utility even for local purposes, could be, in any sense, considered national) to commemorate his Majesty's affectionate visit to Ireland.

I cannot help again reminding my readers, that the King's visit to Ireland stands *alone* in Irish History, distinguished from the visits of all former Kings to our Island, by its affectionate and beneficent object. Former Sovereigns landed here armed with the sword, to make war, or to carry on hostilities in the country. GEORGE the FOURTH visited our shores in the benign spirit of our Blessed Redeemer, as a *Messenger of Peace and Good Will to all*. He came to heal religious animosities, and to reconcile those children of the same stock, who were unhappily, too long divided; to revive the drooping genius of Ireland; to infuse hope into all ranks, and to found his throne upon that most glorious and unassailable basis, the hearts of a brave and loyal People. "The NATIONAL TESTIMONIAL" to commemorate this truly Christian visit, ought

to be as distinct in its object from all other edifices, as the affectionate visit of his Majesty was distinct from the armed visits of his Royal Predecessors. If, however, contrary to this strong claim to pre-eminent distinction,—the NATIONAL TESTIMONIAL be erected in the form of a Bridge, it ought to stand above all competition at the head of its class in the Capital: so full in the public eye that its superiority must strike every visitor of Dublin; so magnificent in its design and execution, as to throw every other Bridge built over the Liffey into inferiority, and to induce strangers at once to exclaim “this, indeed, is the NATIONAL TESTIMONIAL of the King’s visit to Ireland!”

A subscription of twelve thousand pounds, if we consider the heavy temporary stagnation of the arts, manufactures, trade, commerce, and agriculture in Ireland, is more than £50,000 would be in a prosperous season. It is like the widow’s mite, the heartfelt offering of a distressed people; and it is consecrated in the minds of all good men, by its loyal and affectionate intention.—But, if I may be allowed a ludicrous allusion on so great an occasion, I cannot forget Sancho Pancha’s wise lesson, that “we must not attempt to make a velvet cap out of a sow’s ear.” In plain English, the application of this homely adage to the present ques-

tion, means that we must not attempt impossibilities: no man can build even a plain, handsome bridge over the Liffey out of a fund of only £12,090; and if a bridge be attempted with so inadequate a sum, it must be comparatively a mean and contemptible object in its class, far inferior to those already built over the same river, and utterly unworthy, in every sense of the words, to stand as the NATIONAL TESTIMONIAL of his Majesty's most gracious visit to Ireland.

On the fact that the subscription of £12,090 is insufficient to build a dignified or suitable NATIONAL TESTIMONIAL in the form of a Bridge over the Liffey, there is but one opinion. It is pretty clear that the known inadequacy of that sum was the cause which prevented the Irish Architects from sending in plans to the Committee. This is my own opinion, and I have heard it from others who have had opportunities of learning particulars. Surely no person can suppose that it was want of loyalty, or of generous professional pride, that withheld the genius of JOHNSON, or of his able Competitors, from contesting for the glory of a triumph on so honourable an occasion. If a NATIONAL GALLERY for the encouragement of the Fine Arts, with a Grand Equestrian Statue of its ROYAL PATRON in front, had been decided upon, the sum subscribed

would have been nearly, if not altogether, with perhaps a very small addition, adequate to those dignified objects; and I have not a doubt but that the Irish Architects would have entered the field. Their having abstained from all competition, furnishes a volume of powerful and unanswerable arguments against attempting a Bridge. The Committee faithfully and with an honourable zeal, have discharged their duty, and merit the thanks of the Public; but the Honourable and Reverend Mr. POMEROY, in the Report to the Meeting on the 8th instant, stated that the only Plan received by the Committee, was by an English Artist, and was accompanied by an Estimate of £24,000 which "so far exceeded the amount of the sum subscribed (£12,090) as to render its erection IMPOSSIBLE."

It is also certain that there must be a great reduction of the £12,090, by raising the level of the bank at the site adverted to, on the Royal Hospital side of the Liffey, which is so much lower than the opposite bank; and after the heavy expense of constructing a solid causeway of a considerable extent, there would be only about nine or £10,000 left for erecting a Bridge! It is also well known that there was a large mass of valuable old materials worked up in erecting Richmond and Whitworth Bridges,

by which the expenses were considerably lessened; yet the former cost £26,928 7s. 10d. and the latter 26,762 1s. 6d. The question, therefore, of a superior, or even an equal Bridge over the Liffey, as the NATIONAL TESTIMONIAL, is determined by imperative circumstances. In the strong words of the Honourable and Reverend Mr. POMEROY, "*it is impossible.*"

Richmond and Whitworth Bridges reflect credit on those who were concerned in their erection; but the right reason of our deep respect for HIS MAJESTY, points out that the "NATIONAL TESTIMONIAL," if it be a Bridge, ought to be superior in design, execution, and splendour of embellishment, to those two Bridges, and to every other Bridge over the Liffey. A Bridge built with so inadequate a fund on the site alluded to, must not only be very inferior in its class, but it must be exposed to a humiliating comparison with its near neighbour, the Wellington Testimonial, which, even where it is, is at the head of its particular class, in this Country, and cost £21,000!!!

Without any affected refinement, I may, also, object to the exclusion of the "NATIONAL TESTIMONIAL" from the Capital. If the Greeks and Romans had, with a similar want of consideration, erected their public buildings at a

distance from their chief cities, the splendid edifices of Rome and Athens would not have commanded the admiration of the ancient world, and, even in their fall, impressed succeeding ages with a sublime and affecting image of their grandeur. I cannot avoid submitting my humble convictions, with most unfeigned deference, to the better judgment of the subscribers, that it has become their paramount duty, after the wise example of Athens, Rome, London, Paris, Vienna, and all other Capitals, in ancient and modern times, to seize upon this happy opportunity of embellishing the Metropolis of Ireland, by deciding, at their next meeting, upon the erecting a NATIONAL TESTIMONIAL, in a conspicuous part of Dublin, and dedicating it, in the form of a NATIONAL GALLERY to the encouragement of the Fine Arts, under the gracious Patronage of HIS MAJESTY. The KING has already, manifested his wish to patronize the Fine Arts, and has condescended to honor the *Royal Irish Institution*, by taking it under his high and special patronage. These two patriotic bodies, the *Dublin Society*, and the *Royal Irish Institution*, who have already done so much public good, would, no doubt, be proud to second HIS MAJESTY's gracious intentions, on so important an occasion. A Bridge would have nothing either novel or striking in it. We have provision enough of that sort for the *feet*

in Dublin, and almost every city, town, and village in the kingdom. The hitherto too much neglected *head* may now claim some little attention, and there is no building, at present in Ireland, for the encouragment of Painting and Sculpture. A NATIONAL GALLERY, fronted by a *Grand Equestrian Statue* of the KING, its ROYAL PATRON, chiselled by *Kirk*, the Irish Chantrey, would stand alone in all the proud singleness of its *Royal Origin* and its *Lofty National Purpose*. It would not only rank at the head of its class, but be a distinguished class in itself; and even on a modest scale, must form a noble embellishment of the City, uniting the permanent glory of the MONARCH, with the cultivation of intellectual refinement among his Irish People. How great and desirable is that object, which will unite national utility, during the fleeting span of time in the grasp of the living, with the imperishable triumphs of Irish genius, in the long lapse of generations yet unborn, and the flight of ages beyond the foresight of man!

C.

Nov. 22, 1822.

LETTER II.

IN a Letter in a respectable Morning Paper, of the 26th ult. I have shewn that, unless erected in a conspicuous part of the Capital, full in the eye of the Public, and superior in expense, grandeur of design, and splendour of embellishment, to every other Bridge over the Liffey, a Bridge would be contrary to the spirit of HIS MAJESTY's real or supposed words on this subject, and to the intent and end of a NATIONAL TESTIMONIAL. I was also enabled to prove by the evidence of facts, chiefly deduced from the clear and manly statement of the Honorable and Rev. Mr. POMEROY, before the last meeting of the Subscribers, that it is "*impossible*" to erect a suitable Bridge from the subscription of £12,090, or £13,000. If there be any person who, after having read the Reverend Gentleman's Official Report, and having weighed the facts in my last Letter, still entertains an opinion that a mean and useless Bridge, the most mean and contemptible object in its class, over the Liffey,

(for such a 12 or £13,000 Bridge must be), and thrust out of the Capital to an unfrequented and obscure back-ground, will be a fit NATIONAL TESTIMONIAL of Irish gratitude for HIS MAJESTY'S most gracious visit to Ireland; I shall, undoubtedly, respect his well-meant error, and do justice to his motives, without a wish to trespass on his patience by any further discussion. Certainly, if so mean and contemptible a NON-NATIONAL TESTIMONIAL were, unfortunately, to be erected, I agree that it would be a point of prudence to exclude it, as much as possible, from the view of the Capital and of strangers, by consigning it to well merited obscurity, on the very site pointed out by rumour, for its exclusion from the metropolis.

Considering the question of a Bridge to be set aside, by its extreme unpopularity, by an "*impossibility*," and by the right reason of the object, I shall now venture some reflections on the propriety of erecting the NATIONAL TESTIMONIAL, in a conspicuous part of the Metropolis. Lord CHESTERFIELD has observed that, when men put on their court dress, they also put on their court behaviour.—MONTESQUIEU, with a wider field of contemplation, and profounder views, has drawn a valuable inference from a similar observation. The President has remarked that as men generally become more polished in their

manners and adopt more elevated views, on a change of fortune, and being familiarised to a better garb and dwelling, so it is with the Inhabitants of cities, who are inclined to think meanly of themselves and their country, while living in the midst of mean and contemptible buildings; but acquire strong motives for emulation, industry, and enterprise, with national pride and public spirit, when they behold their chief city embellished with splendid public edifices for the cultivation of the Arts and Sciences, erected by their Countrymen, and bearing upon their front the proud stamp and glorious evidence of their national genius. The history of all nations bears testimony to the truth of these observations, and proves that the embellishment of the Metropolis does not merely tend to the employment of capital, the creation of wealth and the attraction of strangers. The same records prove that an embellished Metropolis has, in all ages, tended to stimulate the ardour of mechanical invention, and to promote a spirit of industry, to concentrate the public affections on the common good, and to give a loftier tone and a nobler direction to the genius of the country.

Convinced of the preceding truths, I now respectfully submit to the better judgment, loyalty, and patriotism of his Grace the Duke of

Leinster, and of the other Subscribers, whether sound policy, public feeling, and good taste, as well as affection for HIS MAJESTY, do not concur in the great primary point, that every commemorative NATIONAL TESTIMONIAL, not connected with some provincial locality by its cause or object, ought to be erected in a conspicuous and well-frequented part of the metropolis? If it be admitted, as I hope it will, that this general principle has been, with few exceptions, the practice of all nations in ancient and modern times, and is founded in the honour and interest of the whole community—I trust I am warranted in more particularly applying it to the present instance, and reasoning upon it, as an incontrovertible truth, that the NATIONAL TESTIMONIAL, to commemorate HIS MAJESTY's most gracious visit to Ireland, ought to be erected in a conspicuous part of Dublin. The Capital, in a local, as well as moral, social, and political view, is not only the most conspicuous place and head city of Ireland—but, as the seat of the Irish Government, and the focus of attraction from all other parts of the country, it is the Representative of the National Character in all its lights and shades. The KING visited Dublin as the chief city of Ireland; and it remains to be asked, on what ground of locality, reason, policy, gratitude, or respect for the KING and public opinion, we are called upon to

thrust the NATIONAL TESTIMONIAL, in commemoration of the affectionate meeting of GEORGE the FOURTH and his Irish subjects, into the background of obscurity, out of the capital?

I hope that I need not occupy the attention of the reader by adding another sentence on the propriety and prospective public benefit, of erecting the NATIONAL TESTIMONIAL in a conspicuous part of the capital. If there be any one sound reason, or even the shadow of a temporary motive, for not following the wise examples of all other People—who seize, with avidity, on every public opportunity of exalting their own character, by embellishing their chief city—I may truly confess myself to be altogether ignorant of any such show of reason.

I shall now proceed to observe, that the erection of a NATIONAL GALLERY in Dublin, with an EQUESTRIAN STATUE of HIS MAJESTY (*chiselled by an Irish Artist,*) in front of it, would be the most suitable NATIONAL TESTIMONIAL to commemorate that signal mark of HIS MAJESTY's favour, his gracious visit to Ireland. A bridge over the Liffey, even in the most conspicuous part of Dublin—if men were mad enough to pull down Carlisle-bridge, and to erect another, would be, at best, but a dumb evidence—trodden under foot, and passed over

without question or notice, as a necessary adjunct to the river—unproductive of any public advantage, excepting its narrow, local convenience. It would only provoke ridicule and laughter to term it “*The National Bridge* ;” and with as little propriety could it be termed “*The National Testimonial*.” A NATIONAL GALLERY, erected as the NATIONAL TESTIMONIAL of gratitude to GEORGE the FOURTH, and dedicated to the patronage and encouragement of Painting and Sculpture (which HIS MAJESTY has taken under his gracious protection in Ireland), would not only become a National School for the patronage and improvement of Artists from all parts of Ireland, and, as such, must form the commencement of a memorable and glorious era in this country—but it would also address itself, as a perpetual and eloquent means of National refinement, to the whole Irish People. Nor would its commemorative powers be confined within our shores: a NATIONAL GALLERY would speak to all parts of Europe, “*trumpet-tongued*,” in the works and fame of the Irish Artists, reared under its protective auspices, and patronized by its liberal influence. It surely is not necessary here to detail the advantages to the various mechanic arts and manufactures—to the morals and manners of a people—from their attainment of excellence in those intellectual arts, which have contributed more to

immortalise the grandeur of Greece and Rome, than the victorious career of their armies. A classical edifice, sufficient for the purposes of study and annual exhibitions, with suitable offices—and with an EQUESTRIAN STATUE of the KING, as its ROYAL PATRON—would at once prove an interesting and important embellishment to the metropolis, and be erected at an expense not much beyond the sum already raised by subscription. The splendour of such a Building would not consist in its magnificence, or in the largeness of the sum expended on its erection. As the endowments and virtues of an individual constitute his superior estimation in society, so the purposes of a Building, not its cost alone, create its chief claim to distinction.—The commemorative pre-eminence of the NATIONAL GALLERY would be derived from the splendour and singleness of its great national object : from the memorable era commenced by its erection ; from its important and constant effect in developing the genius of Ireland—in refining the customs and sentiments of the people, and raising the national character at home and abroad. In addition to these solid advantages, what could be more grand or striking than the ceremony of opening its half yearly exhibitions ; the first, displaying, in the prime season of the year, the productions of living Irish Artists ; the second, the works of

the old Masters ? Twice a year the beauty and talents of Ireland, would form a proud and brilliant assemblage in that Temple of taste, to contemplate those treasures of the Arts, and to pronounce the name of GEORGE the FOURTH with reverence and gratitude. These Exhibitions would not only produce a fund for the support of the Establishment, but would excite a spirit of patronage ; encourage the emulation of the Irish Artists, and raise their character into due estimation. Their frequent return would keep the KING's visit for ever fresh in the Public eye and mind, and prove an imperishable NATIONAL TESTIMONIAL of that memorable event. Brick and mortar, stone and brass may decay and vanish in the course of time ; but an intellectual benefit conferred upon his People, will constitute an enviable glory of HIS MAJESTY's Reign, that must brighten in the lapse of centuries, and live to the end of time. The NATIONAL TESTIMONIAL, under such a form, and devoted to such exalted purposes, would stand at the head of its class, and be looked up to as a lofty class in itself. It would become, like the sun in the heavens, a shining light over the whole Island, ripening the seeds of native taste, and fructifying the mental soil. The names of PERICLES, AUGUSTUS, and LEO the Tenth, have triumphed over the wreck of ages, and will flourish to eternity. In like manner, the illus-

trious name of GEORGE the FOURTH, in the NATIONAL GALLERY, will stand foremost among the distinguished Patrons of Genius in the most brilliant periods of history, and will be immortalised as the Royal Father and Patron of the Fine Arts in this Country.

I have always been of opinion, that every thing like a mere political or party feeling ought to be avoided in whatever concerns the encouragement of the Fine Arts. I am, therefore, sorry to hear an anti-Hibernian whisper (for, as yet, no man has dared to give it a form or utterance in print) that the Irish are unfitted for the Fine Arts, and that a NATIONAL GALLERY would be a foolish attempt in this country. Now, as the benefits resulting from a due cultivation of the Fine Arts, are universally admitted, I am really so stupid as not to see any reason why the Irish should be debarred from attempting and succeeding in Painting and Sculpture, as well as all other nations. Their genius has been triumphantly proved, and needs no illustration. But I am happy to say that this gross attempt to fasten an insulting stigma of inferiority and dullness upon the whole people of Ireland, has not originated with an Irishman, nor a resident in this country; it is the whisper of an interested individual; but his opinion of the Irish people has been already refuted by the Gracious Act and

Opinion of HIS MAJESTY, who has condescended to take the *Royal Irish Institution for the encouragement of the Fine Arts*, under his especial patronage. I trust that we shall not be told HIS MAJESTY, in thus expressing his sense of Irish genius, did a foolish act! Will the whisperer dare to affirm in print, that the Irish Nobility and Gentry, who associated and obtained a Royal Charter of incorporation from the KING, for the encouragement of the Fine Arts in Ireland, did a foolish act, and have been acting foolishly in all their proceedings, since the foundation of the Institution? I trust that I have, at once, refuted this whisperer, and have proved that a NATIONAL GALLERY will be a means of enabling the Irish Nobility and Gentry to lend their patriotic co-operation in forwarding HIS MAJESTY'S most gracious intentions for the encouragement of the Irish Artists. I do not mean, in what follows, to give an opinion for or against the advocates or petitioners against "the Union;" because it is my sole object to obtain the impartial votes of both sides for the erection of the NATIONAL GALLERY. As they are, happily, agreed in the great point of inviolable attachment to British connexion, I respectfully venture to submit to these political opponents, a brief hint in the choice of an Artist to erect the NATIONAL TESTIMONIAL. They cannot but be sensible, that whatever un-

necessarily adds to the constant and unavoidable drains of money from Ireland, occasioned by the residence of the Irish Members of Parliament, with their families, in England, must have a tendency to increase the discontent and the cause of the discontent, produced by "*the Union*." In adverting to these differences of opinion at a moment of much public distress, and of meetings to petition, I hope it will be admitted, that the attendance of the Irish Nobility and Gentry in Parliament is the meritorious discharge of a paramount duty. But I confess that I know of no more wise nor practicable mode of strengthening British connexion, and of lessening the cause of the discontent excited by the consequences of the Union, than for Gentlemen of rank and influence to manifest an honest Irish feeling, by giving only a just preference to Irish talents, Irish skill, and Irish capital, in all public works, which Irishmen are competent to execute, with honour to themselves and advantage to their country. I trust that his Grace the Duke of Leinster, and the Subscribers to the NATIONAL TESTIMONIAL, will do me the justice to consider, that I anxiously submit this conciliatory opinion to their calm consideration, with unfeigned deference to their public spirit and better judgment, and with a high sense of the commanding genius of our British fellow-subjects.

C.

Dublin, Dec. 3, 1822.

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C

Dublin, Dec. 8, 1801.

POSTSCRIPT.

IF any circumstance could add to the splendour of an Administration already so rich in well-merited popularity as that of His Majesty's present Representative, it would be the proud and spirit-stirring ceremony of that Illustrious Nobleman's laying the foundation stone of the National Gallery. The circumstances under which that distinguished Statesman was appointed, will ever form a memorable feature in Irish History. In the interval between the landing of the Duke of Ormond, as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and the important day of the Marquess of Wellesley's arrival, a long period of national distraction had elapsed. The Marquess is the first native of Ireland, upon whom that high office has been conferred during one hundred and nine years. It was a measure worthy the first of our Sovereigns, who ever visited this Island on a mission of peace and love, to confer this most important token of his Royal favour and approbation on our noble countryman and the Irish nation. In this act His Majesty furnished an exalted proof of his reliance on the

impartial wisdom, firmness, and temperate spirit of the Representative, whom he had chosen to fulfil his paternal will for the conciliation and welfare of every class and denomination of Irishmen.

Why should not Irishmen erect a National Edifice for the cultivation of the Fine Arts in Ireland? *Leeds* and *Liverpool*, Provincial Towns, have their public edifices for the encouragement of the Fine Arts: *Edinburgh*, the Capital of Scotland, has her's. Shall *Dublin*, the Capital of a country containing a rapidly-increasing population of more than seven millions, by a spontaneous and deliberate act of omission, set herself down below *Leeds*, *Liverpool*, or *Edinburgh*, in taste or public spirit, and remain without so essential a Public Building? In what climate, however unpromising, in what region however remote, in the east or the west, the north or the south, have not Irishmen signalized their great natural endowments and acquirements, and conferred honor upon their country? In the brilliant display of genuine wit and sportive humour; in the sedate competition of learning, knowledge of human nature and profound judgment; in the cabinet, the senate, the pulpit, the bar and the drama; in every department of polite literature and in a taste for the arts, have not Irishmen obtained a

distinguished share of celebrity? Is a list of names necessary where the rolls of renown and attesting history are my witnesses? What Irishman does not feel his blood run in a warmer current of exultation, and his breast swell with a loftier spirit, when he throws his eyes over the records of nations, during the last fifty years? Amidst the political convulsions and tempests which laid waste so many kingdoms and states, he beholds his countrymen surmounting the up-hill steep of difficulty and danger; and shining among the foremost in every field of fame. He beholds Irishmen sounding every depth of art and science; soaring on the wings of imagination into the highest heaven of sublimity and beauty; and crowned with the immortal palms of eloquence, of poetry, painting, and histrionic excellence.

During the long revolutionary war with France, when the Royal Standard of George the Third, and the banners bearing the rose, the shamrock and thistle, under the august auspices of the Prince Regent, floated in proud union over the British columns, the valour of those triumphant columns in the sanguinary campaigns of Portugal, Spain, France, and Flanders, raised the military fame of the British Empire to its highest elevation. The fearless heart and the death-dealing hand of Ireland—her foot, that

still presses forward when an armed enemy is in front, and her blood, that burns with a quick and instinctive sense of honour, were there.— Her soul rose at the sound of the trumpet, when the nations turned pale at the frown of the enemy, and the earth trembled beneath the rushing of his squadrons.

Whenever the crisis was most imminent, the stake most important, the peril most mighty and appalling ; amidst the shock of Fleets and Armies, when Europe reeled from her centre, and the lot of unborn generations hung upon the sword ; there, the commanding wisdom of Ireland marshalled the path to glory ! there, in dread magnificence, her warlike Spirit flamed in the van ! there, wooing the forlorn hope, storming the deadly breach, braving the charge of the bayonet and sabre, the thunders of artillery, the explosion of the mine, Irish Heroism, proudly rising to the magnitude of the occasion, was seen grappling with death as an inheritance of honor, stemming the tide of battle, and turning the fortune of war, by a long career of splendid victories, which overthrew the vaunted "all-conqueror," terminated the tremendous contest, and, with Irish co-operation in the state councils, decided the destinies of the world.

Let but an effort now be made in favour of Irish genius, at home. Let the temple of taste be erected and the emulative circle of intellectual refinement, assisted by the energies of our other great public Institutions, will gradually extend its salutary influence to the utmost limits of this noble island. To be, at once, the Pacificator of Ireland, his native country, and the Founder of the National Gallery for the cultivation and encouragement of those Arts by which the genius of nations is exalted and the blessings of peace rendered more valuable and glorious, would be an act of infinite advantage to the state, and of enviable dignity to the illustrious Founder. It would, indeed, be a consummation sufficient to crown all the other merits of the Wellesley government.

On that memorable day, methinks, "in my mind's eye," I see His Excellency, with that generous alacrity which the desire to fulfil the will of his Sovereign and the love of his country inspire, moving to accomplish this great national object. I see him, an Irish Representative of the King, at the head of the Royal Dublin Society and the Royal Irish Institution, those two great patriotic Bodies, which include so large a portion of the resident Irish nobility and gentry, of the educated mind, talents, and public spirit of Ireland. What triumphal pro-

cession could be more exalted in its object, more praiseworthy, or more productive of beneficial effects upon the national character; more calculated to draw off the mind from unworthy heats and angry passions, and to rouse the hopes and the pride of a generous and highly-gifted people? It requires only a meeting of the Committee appointed by the Subscribers to the fund for erecting the National Testimonial, and a vote for the due appropriation of that Fund, to ensure the accomplishment of this great national purpose, and to place the Subscribers in the glorious list of perpetual benefactors to their country. Let us never forget that the victories and conquests of Greece and Rome have passed away like the lustre of a morning; but the pen, the pencil, and the chisel, in the hands of their men of genius, have rendered the splendid achievements of those nations immortal.

C.

January 14, 1823.

SECOND POSTSCRIPT.

ON the 14th February, 1823, the Committee of Directors of the Royal Irish Institution, instructed their Secretaries, J. Boyd, Esq. and the Rev. J. P. Griffith, to write to the most noble the Marquess Conyngham, respectfully requesting of him to lay before His Majesty, with a suitable expression of humble duty, from the Royal Irish Institution, a Copy of the two printed Letters and a Postscript, proposing to expend the amount of the Public Subscription, in erecting a National Gallery for the encouragement of the Fine Arts in Ireland, under the Protection of the Royal Irish Institution, as the most noble and imperishable Testimony of Irish Gratitude for that signal token of our beloved Sovereign George the Fourth's paternal favor, evinced in his royal visit to this country.

Pursuant to the above resolution on the 14th February, 1823, the Secretaries of the Royal Irish Institution wrote to the most noble the Marquess Conyngham, and also transmitted

that Nobleman the Printed Copy above-mentioned to be humbly laid before His Majesty.

On the 23d of the same month, the Secretaries of the Royal Irish Institution were honored with a Letter from the Marquess Conyngham, dated Brighton, February 19th, 1823, stating that he had "had the honor of laying before His Majesty the publication entrusted to his care, and that he felt great pleasure in communicating to them his Majesty's most gracious reception of it."

On the 14th of February, the Secretaries wrote to the Right Honorable Henry Goulburn, transmitting to him a similar copy of the Letters and Postscript, with a view to the furtherance of the proposition for the erection of a NATIONAL GALLERY contained in these Letters.—And

On 25th, the Secretaries had the honor of receiving his reply, in which he had the goodness to "recommend that the proposition should be submitted to the Committee of Subscribers to the erection of the NATIONAL TESTIMONIAL."

27th February, 1823.

